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THEO 251

Prof. Blanco

21 September, 2011

Exegetical

3. (My text is in good condition.)

4. A. Syntax

prp adj op sub prp op v con con v def do prep adj op adv
Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just

adv s _____v_____ prp op con v ppa s adv prp v op prp ppa op sub
as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he

v def do conj pp s v ____adv_____ adj adv sub v prp _____adj_____
faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years

op con conj poss n s v adv adj con s __v__ v prep op
old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief

prp def op prep op con v v prep ppa op art v do prep op
regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,

v adv v con s v do _v_ prn s _____v_____ s v adv s v
being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why “it was

v prp op adv do def s s _____v_____ prp op _____v_____ adv prp
credited to him as righteousness.” The words “it was credited to him” were written not for

op adv con adv prp op prp io/op s _____v_____ do prp op adv s prp
him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in

do adv v do ____adj___ prp def op s _____v_____ ___prp___ op prp adj op
him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins

con _____v_____ pep op prp adj op
and was raised to life for our justification. Romans 4:18-25 (NIV)

4. B. Structure

Abraham believed
in hope
and so became the father
of many nations
just as it had been said

to him
So shall your offspring be

Without weakening
in his faith
He faced the fact
that
his body was
as good as dead
since he was
about a hundred years old
and that
Sarah's womb was
also dead

Yet he did not waver
through unbelief
regarding the promise
of God
but was strengthened
in his faith
and gave glory
to God
being fully persuaded
that
God had power to do
what he had promised
This is why
"it was credited
to him
as righteousness."
The words…were written
"it was credited to him"
not for him alone,
but also for us,
to whom
God will credit righteousness
for us
who believe
in him
who raised Jesus
our Lord
from the dead.
He was delivered
over to death
for our sins

and was raised
to life
for our justification.

4. C. Analysis

Patterns of word usage include the repetition of words like “believed,” “unbelief,” and “believe.” The word “hope” is used twice, as is the word “faith.” Abraham is the subject of the first three sentences, and the first section is a narrative telling his story. Parallelism is used in each of these first three sentences: Paul contrasts a negative statement with a positive statement (i.e. against hope…in hope, without weakening…he faced the fact, did not waver…but was strengthened). The implication is that Abraham could have done the negative thing, such as weaken in his faith or waver, but instead did the positive thing, which was to have faith. Kaiser describes the word “dead” as colorful, and the word’s repetition achieves a dramatic effect: not only is Abraham’s body “as good as dead,” his wife’s womb is dead as well. Here, “dead” is a figure of speech for infertility. This frank way of stating the facts emphasizes Abraham’s bleak situation,

Paul takes the phrase “credited to him as righteousness” and applies it to “us…to whom God will credit righteousness.” The repetition of this phrase is like a hinge the argument hangs on because it shifts focus from Abraham to Paul’s audience; in effect, Paul is finding a present application. This is inductive reasoning, because Paul moves from the specific story of Abraham, and argues that this story reveals a broad principle about how God credits righteousness and justifies sinners. Paul relates specifics from the story of Abraham, explaining his situation, God’s promise to him, and his response. The way Paul explains the story with enough detail that those unfamiliar with Genesis could still understand his point. He appears to assume that his audience will take it for grated that Abraham was a real person and this story is historically reliable.

4. D. Logical train

1. God promised Abraham offspring.
2. Abraham was about a hundred years old. His body was as good as dead.
3. His wife's womb was also dead.
4. It was against all hope for Abraham to have offspring.
5. Abraham still had hope and was strengthened in his faith.
6. Because he had hope, Abraham became the father of many nations.
7. Because Abraham believed in God's promise, God credited it to him as righteousness.
8. Like Abraham, we believe in the one who raised Jesus from the dead.
9. Jesus' death was for our sins.
10. Jesus' resurrection was for our justification.
11. God credits righteousness to all those who believe in God's promise like Abraham.
12. Therefore, because we believe this, God will credit it to us as righteousness.

5. A. Literary forms

In verses 18-22, Paul retells the narrative of Abraham's belief that God would provide him with children. This is supported by the fact that Abraham is the subject of the first three sentences. In verse 24, Paul shifts focus from Abraham to his present audience. Verse's 24 and 25 are epistolic because Paul is explaining why he has told the story of Abraham to the Romans and returning to his argument.

5. B. Literary conventions

When one reads the story of Abraham in Genesis, questions are raised about Paul writing that Abraham was not "weakening in his faith" and didn't "waver through unbelief," because Genesis describes moments where Abraham certainly appeared to be doubting God's promise (see part 6). However Paul's statements about Abraham's faith do not sound like hyperbole, because he bases his whole argument on Abraham's faith. Rather, Paul may be saying that in spite of these instances of doubt, Abraham still held out faith in God's promise. When Paul writes that Abraham "faced the fact" about his infertility, he may have been thinking of these two instances from Genesis. Abraham literally had faith in God's promise, but Paul's statement that Abraham did not waver through unbelief should not be interpreted to mean that Abraham

never once doubted God for a second. The phrase "as good as dead" is a simile, meaning that at a hundred year's old, Abraham should not have been able to have children. "Sarah's womb was also dead" could either be a metaphor or a simile. Though it doesn't use a word such as "like" or "as," the phrase about Sarah's womb is directly connected to the phrase about Abraham's flesh.

6. A. General context

Although Paul's authorship "has been questioned at times…modern students of the letter almost unanimously agree about its Pauline authenticity. It is usually reckoned today among the unquestioned Pauline letters…"[1] The author of the letter identifies himself as Paul.[2] Romans "was probably written from Corinth in the winter of A.D. 56-57."[3] The Oxford dictionary puts the date at around 58, and claims it was written when "Paul was about to leave for Jerusalem at the close of his 'Third Missionary Journey.'"[4] *Eerdmans Dictionary* says the date could be between "A.D. 54/44 and 58/59."[5]

Paul himself identifies his audience as being in Rome.[6] Some verses indicate that Jews were part of his audience in addition to Gentiles.[7] Because certain manuscripts are shorter than the 16-chapter version of Romans, there is speculation about whether Paul or someone else sent versions of this letter to other congregations with slight changes. However, chapter 4 is not among the disputed chapters. There is still debate, however, about whether Romans is an epistle meant to be read out loud to the whole congregation, or a more personal letter meant to be read

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[1] Fitzmyer, Joseph *A. The Anchor Bible: Romans*. Doubleday,1993. pp 40.
[2] Romans 1:1 (NIV)
[3] *The Essential Bible Handbook*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009. pp 537.
[4] Ed. F.L. Cross. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Oxford University Press, 1989. pp 1196.
[5] Ed. David Noel Freeman. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Eerdmans, 2000. pp 1135.
[6] Romans 1:7 (NIV)
[7] Romans 2:17-21 (NIV)

privately.[8] Nero was the emperor from A.D. 54-68, and the letter to the Romans was written during Nero's five-year golden age, before he lost popularity with the Roman people and gained his infamous reputation.[9]

The distance between Rome and Corinth is about 600 miles.[10] Rome was the capitol of the Roman Empire. Rome was built at the crossing point of the River Tiber, thirteen miles from the sea, with seven hills enclosed by the "Servian Wall."[11] Rome was a growing empire during the time of Paul, with the Ceasers "furnishing the heart of the city with an array of public buildings perhaps never equaled in any capital."[12] The city was overcrowded, but a rich hub of entertainment, culture, and artistry.[13] This huge variety of cultural influences meant that many religions were practiced in Rome, and the presence of pagan religions presented moral problems for Roman Christians. Although the Christians' major persecution under Nero would not come until after the fire in Rome in A.D. 64, Christians may have still faced some persecution. However, the Christian sect was still new and relatively obscure. One source points out that in Acts 28:22, the Jewish leaders in Rome "professed personal ignorance of the sect."[14] Rome had a large Jewish community, around 50,000.[15] The presence of Jews and Gentile Christians together would have caused many to ask questions about whether Christians had to follow Jewish customs. Paul explains in the opening chapter that he hopes to visit Rome soon and he has heard good things about them, indicating that he hadn't been there yet.[16] Paul had met two Roman

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[8] Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The Anchor Bible: Romans*. Doubleday,1993. pp 68.
[9] Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The Anchor Bible: Romans*. Doubleday,1993. pp 26.
[10] Beitzel, Berry J. *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible*. Moody Publishers, 2009. pp 265.
[11] Ed. Allan Millard. *The IVP Atlas of Bible History.* InterVarsity Press, 2006. pp 166.
[12] Ed. I. Howard Marshall, et al. *New Bible Dictionary*. Inter-varsity press, 2002. pp 1028.
[13] ibid.
[14] ibid.
[15] Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The Anchor Bible: Romans*. Doubleday,1993. pp 26.
[16] Romans 1:8-14 (NIV)

Christians, Pricilla and Aquilla, who had fled to Corinth after Claudius had expelled the Jews, and in Acts 19:21, they convinced Paul that he also had to see Rome.[17] Although Paul greets a long list of people by name in chapter 16, Pricilla and Aquilla first and foremost, the rest of the letter deals with broad issues of Righteousness and the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection, subjects that would relate to the whole church in Rome, not just the list of named individuals.

6. B. Immediate context

In chapter 2, Paul discusses external vs. internal circumcision, and claims that the internal is much more important than the external.[18] Chapter 3 is noteworthy because Paul says that there is value in being Jewish, and doesn't fully reject Judaism, but goes on to clarify that Jews are not any better than Gentiles.[19] One of his major points is that "no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law," and claims that now "a righteousness from God, apart from the law, has been made known" and it comes from "faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe."[20] In the verses of chapter 4 which lead up to verses 18-25, Paul discusses Abraham and the nature of justification and righteousness. "Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness."[21] Paul quotes David to back up his idea that righteousness is a blessing apart from works.[22] Another major premise in Paul's argument is that Abraham was credited as righteous before he was circumcised, not after.[23] Also, Abraham is the

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[17] Ed. I. Howard Marshall, et al. *New Bible Dictionary*. Inter-varsity press, 2002. pp 1028.
[18] Romans 2: 17-29 (NIV)
[19] Romans 3:1-2, 9 (NIV)
[20] Romans 3:20-22 (NIV)
[21] Romans 4:4-5 (NIV)
[22] Romans 4:6-8 (NIV)
[23] Romans 4:9-12 (NIV)

father of the circumcised and the uncircumcised who believe, meaning God-fearing Gentiles.[24] His conclusion is that "the promise comes by faith" and that Abraham's offspring includes those "who are of the faith of Abraham" in addition to Jews.[25] After verses 18-25, Paul writes that we have peace with God because of our justification through faith.[26] We can rejoice not only in the hope of God's glory, we can also rejoice in our suffering, which itself produces perseverance, character, and hope.[27] Paul stresses that it's one thing to die for someone who is righteous or good, and it's another thing to die for someone who is sinful, and that this is why we should be filled with hope for our reconciliation.[28]

6. C. Global context

Romans contains many of the most important doctrines in Christianity. Paul discusses law and gospel, man's inability to fulfill the law, God's grace which saves us through faith, Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, and our hope for the future. He makes connections with Old Testament stories like Adam, Abraham and David, explaining how people like Abraham were made righteous in the Old Testament and how Christians are now made righteous in a similar way, apart from the law. He also explains that the law is not to be thrown out because of this. Chapter 5, which follows the section, especially emphasizes the joy and reassurance Christians should have in Christ's redeeming work. The idea that God fulfills his promises is key in chapter 4:18-25.

The "big idea" that this passage of Romans adds to our understanding of the Christian faith is how Abraham's faith is related to the modern Christian's. It also stresses the idea that

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[24] Romans 4:11 (NIV)
[25] Romans 4:16-17 (NIV)
[26] Romans 5:1-2 (NIV)
[27] Romans 5:3-5 (NIV)
[28] Romans 4:6-11 (NIV)

sometimes, having faith is against all hope, and that we may have to face the cold hard facts of our situation, like Abraham had to. However, hope and faith will win out in the end, because God has the power to fulfill His promise and he will credit us as Righteous because of Christ's sacrifice and ressurection.

7. Word selection

The word "credit" and its cognates occur twenty-eight times in Scripture. "Righteous" and its cognates appear 138 times in the New Testament. "Justification" and its cognates appear thirty-seven times in the Old and New Testaments.

A "creditor" is any party, whether God or a person, who is owed something by another party, the "debtor." Also, to "credit" either means to count something as payment for a debt, or to give honor or recognition to someone who deserves it. Esther uses the word "credit" in this second sense, when she gave Mordecai credit for saving the king's life. Words like "creditor" refer to a person who is owed money by a debtor. One example is a law in Deuteronomy which proclaims that creditors should cancel loans to fellow Israelites.[29] However, when Paul uses the word, God is the subject of the sentence, not a human creditor. Whenever someone is "credited as righteous," God is the one doing the crediting. For example, the passage Paul and James both quote from Genesis says that God credited Abraham as righteous, and in Psalms Phineas was credited as righteous.[30] In Ezekiel, the prophet claims that God will credit people's righteousness, and not punish them for the wickedness of their fathers or sons.[31] This passage shows clearly that the word "credit" can refer to sin as well as money. In some passages, God is not clearly the subject, but it is implied that He is. Luke used the expression "What credit is that

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[29] Deuteronomy 15:2 (NIV)
[30] James 2:23, Genesis 15:6, Psalm 106:30-31 (NIV)
[31] Ezekiel 19:20 (NIV)

to you?" on three occasions, Paul of course uses it multiple times, and Peter and James each use it once. By looking up the passage in Luke, one learns that the speaker is Christ addressing his disciples, listing three good works, and asking each time, "What credit is that to you?" because "even 'sinners'" do such good things.[32]. The context of Peter's use of the word reveals that Peter is talking about submission to rulers and authorities. Peter's point was that it's no credit to be beaten for doing something wrong, but it is commendable before God to suffer for doing good.[33] God is the one doing the crediting in this instance, but righteousness is not explicitly mentioned. In contrast, Paul regularly puts the ideas of crediting and righteousness together in more than one of his letters.

When Paul uses "credit" in his passage, does he mean that God is counting something as payment for a debt, or is God giving credit to someone who has earned it? In the same chapter of Romans, Paul says that if a man works, his wages are due to him as an obligation, not a gift, but if a man has faith that God justifies the wicked, he is credited as righteous in spite of his sins.[34] This clearly indicates that when Paul says Abraham was "credited as righteous," he is not using the word the way Esther uses it, where Mordecai got the credit he deserved for doing a good deed. Rather, God's "crediting" means counting something as payment for a debt.

The word "righteousness" is the second half of this pivotal statement. In some passages, God is called "Righteous Father" or "Righteous One."[35] Whereas some passages describe the divine quality of God's righteousness, others refer to humans as righteous. John gives this definition to the word: "Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what

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[32] Luke 6:32-34 (NIV)
[33] 1 Peter 2:13-21 (NIV)
[34] Romans 4:4-5 (NIV)
[35] John 17:25 (NIV), Acts 3:14, 7:52, 22:14 (NIV),

is right is righteous, just as he is righteous."[36] "Righteousness" can describe people's actions: Cain's "own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous."[37] *The New Bible Dictionary* explains that "righteousness" is a word with many uses and a rich understanding, but says the word's root means "straightness" or "an action which conforms to a norm"; in the Bible, righteousness is part of a relationship, either between God and man, or between man and man.[38] Matthew describes Joseph as a righteous man, but since other passages, including Romans 3:9-20, say that no one is righteous and blameless, Joseph's righteousness probably means he was a law-abiding citizen.[39] If Matthew meant Joseph was sinless, it would contradict other passages. Similarly, many passages use "righteous" as a compliment, such as when Simeon is described as a "righteous and devout" man, or the Roman centurion Cornelius[40] Christ used the word "righteous" ironically at times.[41] Christ also taught that "unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."[42] Even gentiles like the centurion were called "righteous" by others, but when Christ used the word, he uses it in reference to sin and being right in God's sight. Though Christ ironically says he came to save sinners, not the "righteous," only the truly righteous will be safe in the next life. In one of his parables, Christ explained that angels will act like fishermen and separate the wicked from the righteous and cast them into the blazing furnace.[43] How then, do we become righteous in this sense, in God's eyes rather than man's?

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[36] 1 John 3:7 (NIV)
[37] 1 John 3:12 (NIV)
[38] Ed. I. Howard Marshall, et al. *New Bible Dictionary*. Inter-varsity press, 2002. pp 1020.
[39] Matthew 1:19, Acts 10:22 (NIV)
[40] Luke 2:25 (NIV)
[41] Matthew 9:13 (NIV)
[42] Matthew 5:20 (NIV)
[43] Matthew 13:44-46 (NIV)

When Paul uses the word "righteous" in Romans, he is often using the word to describe God and His works.[44] When humans are described as righteous, this righteousness comes "from God."[45] It is noteworthy that while other authors like James emphasize actions when they discuss righteousness, Paul often emphasizes faith. James cites the same story of Abraham to make his point about righteousness and concludes that "a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone."[46] In contrast, Paul writes: "Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because 'the righteous will live by faith.' Paul says the law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, 'The person who does these things will live by them.'"[47] James and Paul do not necessarily contradict each other, but their emphasis is certainly different. When Paul uses the word "righteous" or "righteousness," he does not simply mean it as a compliment for a good man. Rather, Paul says it is impossible to achieve righteousness because it comes from God through faith.

Ezekiel used the word "justification" after telling an allegory comparing Israel to an adulterous wife.[48] Claiming that Israel is so bad, they have made their sister nations seem righteous by comparison, Ezekiel says "you have furnished some justification for your sister."[49]

"Justified" can mean that someone is proven right or that someone's trespasses are made right. A Psalm of David says that because we sin, God is justified (proved right) when he judges us.[50] Similarly, Job tried to justify himself rather than God, because he wanted to be proven

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[44] Romans 1:32, 2:5 (NIV)
[45] Romans 1:17-
[46] James 2:20-24 (NIV)
[47] Galatians 3:11-12 (NIV)
[48] Ezekiel 16 (NIV)
[49] Ezekiel 16:51-52 (NIV)
[50] Psalm 51:4 (NIV)

right.[51] Esther uses this same word in another sense when it says that even a great distress would justify disturbing the king. In this case, though, there are circumstances which justify Esther's actions; it's not about proving herself right. When Paul uses the word "justification" in Romans 4:25, he is talking about sins against God and making them right. What proves that Paul is talking about sin is his mention it right before discussing "justification." Later in Romans, Paul argues that like death, which came through the sin of one man, the gift came through one man. He goes on to explain that God's gift is greater than Adam's sin, because Christ's gift "followed many trespasses and brought justification."[52] Paul says that "justification brings life for all men."[53] When it comes to sin, Paul says God is the one who justifies.[54] When Christ mentioned justification, he said that the tax collector who asked for forgiveness who was "justified before God," not the Pharisee. Paul says the ones who are justified are "those who have faith in Jesus."[55] Every single person needs this justification because "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ."[56] In Paul's view, justification is freely given, not earned.

8. Parallel passages

Phrases in Romans 4:18 parallel ones elsewhere in Romans and Genesis. "The father of many nations" is first found in Romans when Paul discusses how Abraham is the father of all who have faith.[57] The original use of "father of many nations" is found in Genesis, when God

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[51] Job 32:2, 40:8 (NIV)
[52] Romans 5:15-16 (NIV)
[53] Romans 5:18 (NIV)
[54] Romans 4:5, 8:33 (NIV)
[55] Romans 4:26 (NIV)
[56] Romans 3:22-23 (NIV)
[57] Romans 4:16-17 (NIV)

changes Abram's name to Abraham, which means father of many.[58] The context of the original promise which Paul quotes, "So shall your offspring be," is when God asked Abraham if he could count the stars, promising him numerous descendents.[59]

Romans 4:19, which discusses Abraham and Sarah's bareness, is similar to Hebrews 11:11. After hearing God's promise, Abraham laughed and said to himself that both he and Sarah were too old.[60] Sarah also laughed, and Genesis says she "was past the age of childbearing."[61] "Deadness" may be a figurative way to describe their flesh, but they were quite literally too old to have kids. Despite their age, God's promise was fulfilled.[62] Hebrews says Abraham considered God faithful, and Paul tells his audience that God is faithful in the thanksgiving section of his epistle to the Corinthians.[63] Not only *can* God fulfill promises, He *will* fulfill them.

When Paul writes that Abraham was "strengthened," other passages suggest this strength came from God.[64] Like Abraham, David also went through difficulties, and when David was afraid we would be stoned, David found strength in the LORD his God, suggesting that Abraham's strength also came from God, not himself.[65] When Jonathan helped David find strength, that strength was also found "in God."[66] A topical Bible revealed more passages that relate to being strengthened in faith. Paul extolled the Corinthians to stand firm in the faith, and told the Colossians to strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ.[67] The object of Abraham's hope was God, whereas the object of hope in Colossians is Jesus. However, this strengthening of faith is

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[58] Genesis 17:5 (NIV)
[59] Genesis 15:4-5 (NIV)
[60] Genesis 17:17-19 (NIV)
[61] Genesis 18:11-14 (NIV)
[62] Genesis 21:2 (NIV)
[63] Hebrews 11:11, 1 Corinthians 1:9 (NIV)
[64] Romans 4:20 (NIV)
[65] 1 Samuel 30:6 (NIV)
[66] 1 Samuel 23:16 (NIV)
[67] Ed. Walter E. Elwell. Banker Book House, 1991. *Topical Analysis of the Bible*. pp 555.

not a work we must do if we want salvation. It is a strength that other passages strongly suggest has God at it's origin.

Abraham "gave glory to God," using a similar phrase found in Matthew when the crowd witnessed the paralytic man healed by Christ.[68] Praising or giving to Glory to God recurs throughout the Gospel books and Acts.[69] Often, this awe and glory is a result of a miracle. There are exceptions to this general rule: Christ says people will "praise your Father in heaven" because of our good deeds, and the disciples praised God when they saw that God granted repentance even unto gentiles.[70] It is unclear whether Abraham's praise is motivated by amazement of God's miraculous power or by thankfulness for God's grace. It could be both.

Paul says Abraham was assured that "God had the power to do what he had promised." God himself asked Abraham "Is anything too hard for the LORD?"[71] Multiple Old Testament passages affirm that God can do all things and has strength.[72] Christ taught that with God, all things are possible.[73] Luke wrote twice that nothing is impossible for God.[74] A topical Bible says this verse supports the idea that "God formulates plans and acts on them."[75] A parallel passage in Romans 8 says God "foreknew" and "predestined" Christians to be conformed to the likeness of his Son; God predestines us, calls us, and glorifies us.[76] This verse informs us that when God promised Abraham descendents, justification for believers through Christ was already part of God's predestined plan.

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[68] Matthew 9:8 (NIV)
[69] Matthew 5:16,15:31, Luke 7:16, 13:13, 17:15, 23:47, John 15:8, Acts 4:21, 11:18, 21:20
[70] Acts 11:22
[71] Genesis 18:14 (NIV)
[72] Job 42:2, Isaiah 40:29, 50:2, 51:9, Jeremiah 32:17, 27 (NIV)
[73] Matthew 19:26 (NIV)
[74] Luke 1:37, 18:27 (NIV)
[75] Ed. Walter E. Elwell. Banker Book House, 1991. *Topical Analysis of the Bible*. pp 45.
[76] Romans 8:28-29 (NIV)

When Paul writes that it was "credited to him as righteousness" he is referring to Genesis when God spoke to Abraham, and the phrase is repeated four times in Romans.[77] The phrase is used in a similar context in Psalms.[78] Paul used it in a similar way in Galatians, stressing that faith was what counted, not works.[79] When James cites the same story, he concludes that Abraham was justified by what he did, "not by faith alone."[80] Reading James and seeing how his view seems to differ from Paul's makes interpreting Paul's message puzzling, but given everything Paul says about faith in Romans, it is clear that Paul thinks being "credited as righteous" is through faith, not works. James never directly contradicts this idea.

Paul writes that God's words to Abraham "were written…for us."[81] A parallel passage in Psalms refers to writing for a future generation, and God asked Habakkuk to write down his revelations.[82] Paul says that what was "written in the past was written to teach us."[83] He uses it twice in Corinthians, always pointing to something in the Old Testament and arguing that it applies to the current situation.[84] The famous passage from 2 Timothy is connected with this verse, suggesting that everything in the Old Testament is "God-breathed and is useful."[85] Thus, when Paul uses Abraham's story, it lends authority to His argument about justification.

Paul clarifies that when he says the words were written for "us," he means those "who believe in him." When describing how to be saved, Paul says confess Jesus is Lord and "believe

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[77] Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:5,9,22 (NIV)
[78] Psalm 106:30-31 (NIV)
[79] Galatians 3:6 (NIV)
[80] James 2:23-24 (NIV)
[81] Romans 4:24 (NIV)
[82] Psalm 102:18, Habakkuk 2:2 (NIV)
[83] Romans 15:4 (NIV)
[84] 1 Corinthians 9:10, 10:11 (NIV)
[85] 2 Timothy 3:16,17 (NIV)

in your heart that God raised him from the dead," echoing words from the Gospel of John[86] Peter writes something similar to Paul, that we should believe in the one who raised Jesus, but adds that belief comes through Jesus, suggesting that our faith isn't a work but a gift.[87]

Who is it who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead? When Peter addressed the crowd in Acts, he said that "God raised him from the dead."[88] This testimony is repeated throughout Acts, explaining that witnesses saw the risen Christ, that this fulfilled God's promise to the Jew's ancestors, that Christ never decayed.[89] Paul used it himself in front of the statue to the unknown God, saying that Christ would judge the world, that all needed to repent, and that Christ's resurrection was proof of this.[90] Paul says that baptism is like what happened to Christ: in the way Christ was raised from the dead, we are buried through baptism that we might be raised.[91] Paul promises that as God raised Christ from the dead, he will also give life to our mortal bodies.[92] Paul said God raised the Lord from the dead.[93] All these uses suggest a literal raising to life from death.[94] Also, God and Christ are the subjects of these two sentences, not human beings. The remission of sins and justification have nothing to do with our own actions, but were fully accomplished by Christ being handed over to death and being raised to life by God.[95]

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[86] Romans 10:9 (NIV)
[87] 1 Peter 1:21 (NIV)
[88] Acts 2:24 (NIV)
[89] Acts 2:32, 13:30, 33, 34, 37, (NIV)
[90] Acts 17:31 (NIV)
[91] Romans 6:4 (NIV)
[92] Romans 8:11 (NIV)
[93] 1 Corinthians 6:14
[94] 1 Corinthians 15:15, Ephesians 1:20, Colossians 2:12, Hebrews 13:20, 1 Peter 1:21 (NIV)
[95] Ed. Walter E. Elwell. Banker Book House, 1991. *Topical Analysis of the Bible*. pp 451.

"He was delivered over for our sins."[96] Passages in the Old Testament speak of the Messiah being pierced for our transgressions, and crushed for our iniquities.[97] Paul reiterates Christ's death for us, ungodly, powerless sinners, throughout Romans.[98] Christ's death was a gift to us from God.[99] The final part of the verse says Christ was "raised to life for our justification."[100] Isaiah speaks of a righteous servant who will justify many.[101] Paul says we have peace with God through Jesus Crist because of this justification.[102] In Romans, parallel passages discuss the nature of justification.[103] Justification is one part of what Christ did, along with sanctification and being washed.[104]

9. A. Personal Knowledge of Doctrine

I believe in God's omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. God's power to work the impossible is demonstrated through the miraculous intervention required to allow a 100-year-old man to impregnate a barren wife. The words, "God had power to do what he had promised," teach us that however crazy God's promise sounds, he inevitably comes through.

I also believe righteousness comes by grace through faith, an idea couched in this passage. In Genesis, Abraham actually showed moments of weakness and doubt, but these weren't counted against him. Rather, his faith was "credited to him as righteousness" even before the Abraham had been circumcised or the Law had been given to Moses.

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[96] Romans 4:25 (NIV)
[97] Isaiah 53:5-6 (NIV)
[98] Romans 5:6, 8 (NIV)
[99] Romans 8:32 (NIV)
[100] Romans 4:25 (NIV)
[101] Isaiah 53:11(NIV)
[102] Romans 3:24 (NIV)
[103] Romans 5:1, 9, 16, 18, 8:30 (NIV)
[104] 1 Corinthians 6:11 (NIV)

Christ's death and resurrection, which provided forgiveness of sin and allow us to be right with God, is explicitly laid out in verse 25.

9. B. Book of Concord

The Book of Concord references one verse, Romans 4:25, in it's article on the "office and work of Jesus Christ" for redemption.[105] It was one of Luther's non-negotiable doctrines: we are justified by faith alone, not by merit. Luther uses the verse from Romans to introduce the point, then supplements it with other verses. Essentially, the verse is the summation of the confession in one short sentence, combined with a verse from John which says Christ takes away the sins of the world.[106] This particular verse is not used again until much later, in the section "Concerning Law and Gospel."[107] Before the verse is used, two separate definitions of "gospel" are explained, with the broad definition including all of Christ's message, and the stricter definition focusing on statements of God's grace.[108] After defining law as "divine teaching" which shows the will of God, how humans were created, how humans should conform to Gods will, the author explains that the law's purpose is to show our deficiency, and moves on to gospel, the purpose of which is to comfort the afflicted sinner.[109] Romans 4:25 is used as the first example of gospel in this discussion. The author says sinners should put their trust in Christ, and the verse is used to describe of Christ and what he did for all. The author then segues to other verses which describe Christ's redemptive work and why it should be distinguished from the law, which has no comfort in it for sinners.[110]

9. C. Doctrinal Theology

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[105] *The Book of Concord.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000. pp 301.
[106] John 1:29 (NIV)
[107] *The Book of Concord.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000. pp 581-586
[108] idib, 582.
[109] ibid, 582-583.
[110] ibid, 583.

10.

"Jesus our Lord" is mentioned in Romans 4:24-25, and is a key focus of the book as a whole. After Paul told the story of Abraham and God, he calls Jesus "Lord," perhaps to connect Christ with the God of Abraham. If so, then what Paul says about God's nature could also be said about Christ's nature. Therefore, we know from the passage that Christ is capable of miracles, the same way God could miraculously give Abraham a son, that Christ has the power to fulfill what He promises, and that we will be credited as righteous. When Paul discusses Christ by name, he summarizes the Gospel in a few sentences: God raised Christ from the dead, so we have assurance of the resurrection. This passage says Christ's death was for our sins and his resurrection was for our justification. This tells us why Christ had to die, and what his death and resurrection means for us. We learn that God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, meaning that we shouldn't gloss over the fact that Christ will be a judge.[111] To be more righteous than the Pharisees, we need a "righteousness from God that comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe."[112] Because we have been justified, however, we have a peace which comes "through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand."[113] Christ is not only a judge, but a source of comfort. After all, Christ died for the ungodly and the sinners.[114]

11. Law and Gospel Statements

Law:

We should not weaken in our faith. (v. 19)

We should face the facts. (v. 19)

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[111] Romans 2:16, John 3:15 (NIV)
[112] Romans 3:22-23 (NIV)
[113] Romans 4:1 (NIV)
[114] Romans 5:6-8 (NIV)

We should not waver through unbelief. (v. 20)

We should be strengthened in our faith and give glory to God. (v. 20)

We should be convinced, like Abraham, that God has power to do what he promises. (v. 21)

We should believe in him who raised Jesus from the dead (v. 24).

Gospel:

God blessed Abraham with the promise of offspring. (v. 18)

God fulfills his promises. (v. 21)

God credited Abraham as righteous. (v. 22)

God rose Jesus from the dead, and credits all who believe as righteous. (vv. 23-24)

God [Jesus Christ] was delivered to death for our sins. (v. 25)

God raised Jesus to life for our justification. (v. 25)

God credits righteousness to us (vv. 23-24).

12. Translation comparison

Of the five translations considered, the two translations which provided the most remarkable distinctions of syntax and changes in meaning were the New Living Translation (NLT) and the New American Standard Bible (NASB). The others were the New King James Version and the English Standard Version.

New Living Translation
Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!" And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah's womb.
Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God. (NLT)

New American Standard Bible
In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE." Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, *He* who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

New International Version
Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

The NLT, of course, puts the Bible in more conventional language, but even when ignoring minor changes, one can find plenty of changes of meaning. In the first sentence, having "no reason for hope" is softer than saying "against hope." "Against" suggests that not only did Abraham not have reason to hope, he may have had reason to despair. Second, the NLT says Abraham believed he would become the father of many nations while the other two version simply say he believed, without specifying what exactly Abraham is believing in. The NIV suggests that Abraham becomes the father of many nations because of his belief, a nuance lost in NLT. The way NASB is worded, it makes it sound like becoming the father of many nations motivated Abraham's belief. NIV and NLT say Abraham did not weaken in his faith, whereas NASB says that he did not become weak in his faith. Could one weaken or have doubts without becoming weak in faith? The wording of the first two suggest Abraham never weakened, but that

is not clear in NASB's wording. In NLT, Abraham "figured his body was as good as dead," whereas in NIV, he "faced the fact" and in NASB, he "contemplated his own body." Because of the way NLT is worded, it sounds like Abraham thinks he is infertile, when he really isn't, whereas in the other versions, it's stated as a plain fact that Abraham is infertile. Also, NLT stresses the deadness of Sarah's womb less starkly than the other two. In the NIV and NASB, Sarah's womb isn't "as good as dead" but rather it's just dead. NIV says Abraham strengthened in faith, while NASB says he grew strong in faith. Depending on what it means to have strong faith, one could strengthen in faith but still not have strong faith, in the way one could get a little taller, but still not be very tall. NLT says that "in this he brought glory to God" which may not mean anything different from the other versions which say Abraham gave glory to God. The NLT may suggest that Abe's faith glorified God, whereas in the other two he is simply giving God glory. All three versions convey the idea that Abraham believed God could do what He promised, but NASB adds that because of Abraham's confidence, "he was able to perform" possibly meaning overcome his infertility. NLT separates the complicated point about being credited as righteous into smaller sentences. Notably, NASB and NIV say we will be credited as righteous, then goes on to clarify that we are those who believe in the one who raised Jesus from the dead. NLT says God will count us as righteous *if* we believe.

13. Bible commentaries

The three commentaries I used include *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, which is more interpretive, *The Anchor Bible: Romans*, which is more analytical and.

John MacArthur's summarizes the earlier parts of the chapter of Romans as demonstrating that justification comes by grace, through faith, not by works nor keeping the law.[115] In his opinion, what verses 18-25 demonstrate is that justification comes

[115] MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur Bible Commentary.* Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005. p

through divine power, not human effort.[116] Much of his analysis agrees with my earlier conclusions. However, I had interpreted Abraham's giving glory to God as praise or worship, rather than concluding that Abraham's actions glorified God. My thinking was that human actions could not glorify God, because no amount of good deeds could impress Him.[117] By looking at parallel passages, I concluded Abraham "gave glory to God" in much the same way witnesses of miracles praised God for what they saw. Rather than interpreting Abraham's giving glory to God as literal praise, MacArthur says that "believing in God affirms His existence and character and thus gives Him glory."[118] This appears to be in tension with my earlier assumption that human actions cannot impress or glorify God. MacArthur cites two Bible passages to supplement his interpretation: Hebrews 11:6 and 1 John 5:10. The passage in Hebrews says that it is impossible for man to please God without faith, implying that faith can please God.[119] My conclusion is that, since faith comes from God and is not a human work, it certainly can please or glorify God, thus there is no contradiction with the passage in Isaiah.

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16.

1517.
[116] ibid.
[117] Isaiah 64:6 (NIV).
[118] MacArthur, John. 1518.
[119] Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)

All notes

A key point of Paul's argument is taking Abraham's story and applying it to his audience's salvation. When he does this Paul is relying on Scripture as "God's final Authority."[120] When Paul takes a passage from the Old Testament and says this verse tells us we are saved today, that is reassuring information for people who believe that Scripture has authority. Paul did this in Romans twice.[121]

context, who uses, to whom

Paul tells a story about Abraham which originally comes from Genesis. There were times where Abraham appeared to doubt God's promise. Abraham slept with Hagar to produce offspring at first, not Sarah.[122] This context is important to remember when Paul discusses Abraham's hope and faith.

ESV uses the word "counted" instead of "credited," and

There are differences in several versions about how Abraham's belief related to his becoming the father of many nations. The way NIV is worded, it sounds like Abraham simply "believed," not specifying what he believed in, whereas in ESV's wording, Abraham believed that he should become the father of many nations. The New Living Translation rewrites God's words to Abraham from "So shall your offspring be" to "That's how many descendents you will have!" ASV says Abraham contemplated his own body, whereas NIB says he faced the facts about his body. Remarkably, ESV says Abraham considered his own body, and NKJV says he did not consider his own body. Again, NLT puts it in the vernacular, saying Abraham figured his body was as good as dead. The NKJV simply describes his flesh and Sarah's womb as dead, leaving out the phrase "as good as." The ESV doesn't use parallelism to describe both Abraham's flesh and Sarah's womb as dead, using the word barren for Sarah. The NLT suggests that both Abraham's flesh and Sarah's womb were "as good as dead," meaning that the couple's barrenness is not as strongly stressed. The syntax of NLT adds a meaning when it says "his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God." Other versions simply say Abraham gave glory to God, while NLT adds the idea that Abraham's faith brought God glory. NLT also adds an "if" statement. Whereas other versions say those who believe in the one who raised Christ will be counted as righteous, NLT says we will be counted righteous *if* we believe.

Because it rewords Scripture, NLT offers the most differences to other versions.

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[120] Ed. Walter E. Elwell. Banker Book House, 1991. *Topical Analysis of the Bible*. pp 240.
[121] Romans 4:23-24, Romans 10:10-11 (NIV)
[122] Genesis 16 (NIV)

Whereas the other versions discuss Abraham not weakening in faith, ASV says he did not become weak; that nuance could change the meaning, because ASV doesn't explicitly say that Abraham never weakened one bit.

NIV, Abraham became
ESV, that he should become
NIV faced the fact
ESV considered his own body
ESV loses parallelism
counted instead of credited
ESV skips death

English Standard Version
In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. (ESV)

New King James Version
who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, *"So shall your descendants be."* And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore *"it was accounted to him for righteousness."*
Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. (NKJV)

New Living Translation
Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!" And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah's womb. Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. And when God

counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God. (NLT)

New American Standard Bible
In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE." Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, *He* who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.